

## PLAS-YN-LLAN

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>PGW (G) 55 (CON)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	116
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SH 802 701
<b>Former County Council</b>	Gwynedd
<b>Unitary authority</b>	Conwy
<b>Community Council</b>	Eglwysbach
<b>Designations</b>	Listed building: Plas-yn-Llan Grade II
<b>Site Evaluation</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Primary reasons for grading</b>	Survival of the structure of an interesting and unusual partly rock-cut walled and terraced garden of the late seventeenth century probably created for the use of Sir John Wynn of Wynnstay.
<b>Type of Site</b>	Walled and terraced garden; orchard
<b>Main Phases of Construction</b>	Late seventeenth century

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Plas-yn-Llan is a substantial farmhouse situated on the western edge of the valley floor to the south of the village of Eglwysbach. Behind the house, to the west, the ground rises quite steeply. The farm is approached down a hedge-lined unmetalled drive running south-westwards from the minor road south of the village. This leads to a yard with a substantial stone barn on the south side, further stone outbuildings to the west and a substantial stone stable block to the north. The drive runs in front of this to the south end of the house.

The house is a rendered, two-storey building with mullioned and transomed windows, three tall chimneys and a pitched slate roof. It consists of a main block aligned north-south, with a smaller extension westwards at the north end. The main entrance, a simple round-arched door, is on the east side. The house, a property of the Wynn family, dates to the mid to third quarter of the sixteenth century. It was extended and altered probably in the early seventeenth century. No substantial alterations have taken place since. The major phase of activity associated with the garden, however, was probably in the late seventeenth century when the stable block was built. This phase is represented in the house by two large heraldic plaster overmantels which bear the arms and abbreviated titles of Sir John Wynn, 5th Baronet, of Watstay/Wynnstay and are dated 1684.

A substantial, two-storey, stable block lies to the south of the house. It is a long, tall building, aligned north-south, of rubble stone construction, built against the slope to the west. On the east side is a row of tall doors, their upper parts glazed, with windows over. Near the north end is a door fronted by high quality, semi-circular dressed stone steps. At the north end is a flight of steps down to basement level. This building dates to the late seventeenth century and was no doubt part of the improvements set in train in or around 1684 for Sir John Wynn. Its size and quality would suggest that he intended to visit Plas-yn-Llan occasionally.

To the south are further farm buildings, chiefly consisting of a large stone barn set at right-angles to the stable block and an L-shaped single-storey stone range immediately to the south-west, with four wide openings (the southern one blocked up) on the east- and south-facing sides.

The garden of Plas-yn-Llan is of modest size and falls into two main areas: the level ground in front of the house and the steeply sloping ground behind it. In front, to the east of the house, is a rectangular stone walled enclosure extending from the north end of the house to the drive to its south. The wall is of rubble construction, c. 1.2 m high, with no coping. The interior is grassed over and sometimes grazed, with a few small fruit trees at the southern end. A path, fenced off from the rest of the enclosure, leads to the front door.

The garden behind the house is walled and terraced and has long fallen into disuse as a garden. It is now largely grassed over and grazed. Immediately behind the house a vertical face has been cut into the slope to provide a level platform for the house. This face is partly revetted with a rubble stone wall and where the stone wall meets the rock face is a flight of crumbling stone and rock-cut steps leading up to a levelled strip of ground on which a track from the yard to the south leads to the upper floor of the north end of the house. The garden proper begins above this level.

The garden consists of two walled enclosures on the steep slope. The main, and largest enclosure lies behind the house and stable block; the second, probably an orchard, lies to its south. At the bottom, the main enclosure is reached by a flight of rock-cut steps, now partly grassed over, aligned north-south and set against a high projecting corner of the garden, revetted on the east and north by rubble stone walls. These form a raised platform which may have been a viewing point of some kind. Other than this walling there is no enclosing wall along the foot of the garden.

At the top of the north side of the enclosure is a huge rubble stone revetment wall, with traces of rendering, its north end broken down by a large sycamore growing in it. Along the north side are the remains of a wall constructed of large blocks of stone. Below the revetment wall is a narrow terrace, a partly rock-cut scarp and then a wider terrace, with a slope below.

In the centre of the upper end of the garden is a large rock-cut stepped platform with the remains of rock-cut steps down from it on the north side and with a flight of rock-cut steps leading eastwards down the slope. These have a low rock wall to their south and a rock-face drop to the terraces to the north. To the south the upper part of the garden has three terraces, divided by steep, partly rock-cut scarps. A large oak tree

grows on the second scarp. The uppermost terrace is backed by a scarp with a small section of revetment wall at the south end. Below is a slope down to the corner platform and steps at the bottom of the garden. The garden is enclosed on the south side by a partly ruinous rubble stone wall.

Apart from the terraces and steps no internal layout is visible, the whole enclosure being grassed over and grazed. A few seedling trees, notably the sycamore and oak, have invaded, but there is no original planting.

To the south of the main enclosure is a further, smaller one, surrounded by low rubble stone walls. The ground descends steeply to the east and is not terraced. The enclosure is grassed and planted with cherry trees. It is likely that it was always an orchard.

The history of the garden is linked to that of the house and stable block; the most likely period for its creation is c. 1684, when Plas-yn-Llan was greatly improved for occasional use by Sir John Wynn. The formal, terraced style of the garden would be in keeping with this date and the making of such an impressive garden, together with the building of the stable block and improvements to the house, would have raised the status of the house from a mere farmhouse to a gentleman's residence, even if only occasional.

## **Sources**

### **Primary**

Information from Mr P. Welford.

### **Secondary**